**Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council**

**Questionnaire on current levels of representation of women in human rights organs and mechanisms**

**Submission of Ireland**

**May 2020**

**Question 1:**

**Do current processes in the State allow for, or encourage, a consideration of gender balance when nominating, electing and appointing** **experts for human rights organs such as the Advisory Committee and treaty bodies? Do these processes ensure publicity, transparency, and participation by civil society organizations and/or other actors?**

Support for women candidates is a priority criterion for Ireland in its decision making process on elections to all human rights organs.

**Question 2:**

**Does the State take into account the gender composition of the treaty bodies or the Advisory Committee at the time of nomination or election?**

Yes. With the exception of CEDAW, gender parity on treaty bodies is a priority during elections.

**Question 3:**

**Does the State have any good national practices related to the nomination, election and appointing processes for human rights organs such as the Advisory Committee and treaty bodies? Do these processes take into account gender when nominating, electing, or appointing?**

There is no formal procedure in place for screening potential candidate for nomination. Consideration of candidates for nomination is carried out on a case-by-case basis in the context of the immediate vacancy and the particular expertise required. As mentioned previously, support for women candidates is a priority criterion for Ireland.

**Question 4:**

**How does the State take into consideration its obligations concerning non-discrimination and women’s right to equal access to participation, as well as its obligations under Article 8 of CEDAW to ensure women’s equal participation in the work of human rights organs when nominating or appointing candidates for those organs and mechanisms?**

Ireland has a policy of achieving gender balance in HRTBs and supports candidates at election that will help achieve that goal.

**Question 5:**

**How many women has the State nominated to human rights organs and mechanisms in the last five years (such as the Advisory Committee or treaty bodies)?**

Ireland has not nominated candidates of any gender to HRTBs in the past five years. Ireland has twice nominated a woman candidate to a treaty body in recent years (CERD, 2010 and 2013). Ireland has nominated female candidates for two special procedure vacancies over the period (the only nominations made during this timeframe) and one female candidate for the Chair of the HRC’s Forum on Minority Issues.

**Question 6:**

**Does the State take any action to publicize and encourage women to apply for the special procedures mandate-holders vacancies?**

As mentioned above, consideration of candidates for nomination is carried out on a case-by-case basis in the context of the immediate vacancy and the particular expertise required.

**Question 7:**

**What are the main challenges within your country in tackling the issue of gender balance when nominating and electing candidates for human rights organs and mechanisms such as the Advisory Committee, treaty bodies and the special procedures?**

In the election of candidates for human rights organs etc, Ireland must weigh the importance of gender balance against other criteria such as regional representation, rotation, candidate’s expertise and bilateral relations. Often, the absence of women candidates, either in total or from specific regions, is the main challenge in tackling gender imbalance.

**Question 8:**

**Are there good practices by the State or other stakeholders that ensure gender parity? If yes, could you please share these practices?**

Ireland makes known to all candidate countries its preference for gender parity on treaty bodies and (with the exception of CEDAW) its priority support for candidates that will maintain or achieve gender parity.

**Question 9:**

**Are there recommendations directed to States, international bodies, or other entities, that you wish to make in order to strengthen and inform this report?**

Achieving gender parity on treaty bodies lies with nominating States as well as States Parties. Ireland encourages States to nominate more women candidates so that States Parties have the broadest possible chance to achieve gender parity while also considering other important criteria such as expertise and regional representation.